

TESTIMONY OF TOM SWAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP (CCAG)

February 21, 2019

BEFORE THE ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

IN SUPPORT OF

**HB 6242 AN ACT PROHIBITING SURCHARGES FROM BEING LEVIED ON UTILITY CUSTOMERS TO
SUBSIDIZE INTERSTATE NATURAL GAS PIPELINE CAPACITY**

HB 5002 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN NEW DEAL

**SB 468 AN ACT CONCERNING THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS ON STATE LAND NEAR PUBLIC
HIGHWAYS**

HB 5789 AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEAD BY EXAMPLE PROGRAM

**HB 7016 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONSERVATION AND LOAD MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THE
INSTALLATION OF HEAT PUMPS.**

AND IN OPPOSITION TO

HB 6239 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRIC SUPPLIERS, DIRECT BILLING AND CLEAN ENERGY FACILITIES

**HB 5687 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRIC SUPPLIERS REDUCING RATES FOR GENERATION SERVICES
WITHOUT NOTICE**

HB 5381 AN ACT REDEFINING "CLASS II RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE"

Senator Needleman, Representative and other members of the Energy and Technology Committee my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group. I apologize for not being able to testify in person on several important bills today but have to be away for business. Below are comments on bills on behalf of our member families.

Pipeline Tax

We support HB 6242 AN ACT PROHIBITING SURCHARGES FROM BEING LEVIED ON UTILITY CUSTOMERS TO SUBSIDIZE INTERSTATE NATURAL GAS PIPELINE CAPACITY. There is no reason for us to be keeping this pipeline tax on the books. The rationale Governor Malloy advanced in passing the pipeline tax no longer exists and we should not eliminate the need for future legislatures role in approving possible taxes on rate payers. The other states who were purported to be building parts of the pipeline will not be doing it, because their financing mechanisms were knocked down by the courts and Massachusetts had a town blow up to excessive pressure in a gas line.

Furthermore, the doomsday need for increased gas capacity has proven to be overstated. The declining cost of Wind, Solar and the increased storage capacity coming on line makes pipeline expansion an expensive boondoggle that will have Connecticut ratepayers on the hook for a long time. We should be dedicating our limited resources to advancing Governor Lamont's carbon neutral strategy and not paying for a pipeline whose primary purpose will be allowing fracked gas to be shipped to Europe.

The approval of a pipeline tax should be the purview of the legislature and not PURRA. This legislation returns that authority to you.

Green New Dealand

CCAG strongly supports the national New Green Deal and hope that HB 5002 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN NEW DEAL becomes a state model worthy of the title of the bill. The idea of a Green New Deal is that we make the types of changes in our economy that would adequately protect us and our children from the looming catastrophe of climate change while addressing inequality in a manner that lives up to the moniker of the New Deal. The questions that we need to consider as we write the bill. They include:

- How quickly does it move us to a 100% renewable economy?
- How does it maximize job creation in a manner that addresses economic and racial inequity?
- How does it help make communities resilient and bring the benefits to communities that have not benefited from existing programs?
- What is a fair mechanism to finance such a program?

We look forward to working with you to answer these questions in a way that will live up to the aspirational title of the bill.

Solar Highway

CCAG agrees with the concept being promoted in SB 468 AN ACT CONCERNING THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS ON STATE LAND NEAR PUBLIC HIGHWAYS. We are behind our neighboring states in utilizing the spaces by our highways to advance clean energy and we believe doing this matters more than just the energy generated in terms of making it clear our commitment to clean energy. We think that as the bill goes forward it needs a clearer process for implementing this and clarity on the language related to public lands would be helpful.

Lead by Example and Heat Pumps

CCAG supports the concepts being advanced in HB 5789 AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEAD BY EXAMPLE PROGRAM and HB 7016 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONSERVATION AND LOAD MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THE INSTALLATION OF HEAT PUMPS, but the lack of details in the proposed legislation keeps us from fully endorsing these bills. The state should ramp up our Lead by Example program in a manner that will save the state money and help to advance our clean energy goals. In addition to state owned facilities we should look to include public housing and incentives for municipalities and non-profits doing business with the state. The improvement of the technology related to heat pumps makes them a more effective tool in advancing our clean energy goals and we should revisit how they are a part of state strategy.

There are also several bills that we strongly oppose on the agenda today.

Third Party Suppliers

We are disappointed that the Committee chose to raise the proposals outlined in HB 5687 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRIC SUPPLIERS REDUCING RATES FOR GENERATION SERVICES WITHOUT NOTICE and HB 6239 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRIC SUPPLIERS, DIRECT BILLING AND CLEAN ENERGY FACILITIES. We need to end third party suppliers for residential consumers not give them more tools to scam consumers. 5687 is an effort to end the reporting of changes in rate under the guise of rate reduction – what company wouldn't want to let their customers know when they were saving them money? The misleading antics here are further proof why we need to stop the ability of many suppliers from preying on consumers.

CCAG strongly opposes allowing suppliers into direct billing and operating facilities. It is exactly what we do not need. We need to end the scam that many of these companies have proven to be and not give them more ways to take money from consumers. We support clean energy, but do not believe these companies will advance a real cost-effective strategy for meeting our goals.

Finally, we oppose the idea of making all trash to energy an outlined in HB 5381 AN ACT REDEFINING "CLASS II RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE." By and large they do not produce clean energy and should not be classified as such.

Thank you for your consideration.